

**STATEMENT BY MR OSEA CAWARU, PERMANENT SECRETARY
FOR DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE FIJIAN
NATIONAL AUTHORITY AT THE FOURTH REVIEW CONFERENCE**

The Chairperson of the 4th Review Conference, Director General,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor and privilege for me, on behalf of the Fijian Government and the people of the Republic of Fiji, to be given the opportunity to address the Fourth Review Conference.

Please allow me, Your Excellency, Agustín Vásquez Gómez, Ambassador of the Republic of El Salvador to congratulate you on your election as the Chairperson of the Fourth Review Conference. Your experience and skills will successfully drive the proceedings and success of this Conference. We also wish to express our outmost appreciation to the Executive Council and the Open-Ended Working Group, led by the distinguished Ambassador of Indonesia H.E. Mr I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja on the preparation of the Fourth Review Conference.

We also would like to acknowledge the appointment of Ambassador Fernando Arias as the new Director-General who no doubt will continue the exceptional work of the OPCW, and its Technical Secretariat, in our pursuit for a world free of chemical weapons.

Mr Chairperson, Fiji aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Ambassador Haifa Aissami Madah of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on behalf of the States Parties of the Non-Aligned Movement and China.

As a small island state in the South Pacific Region, Fiji showed its commitment to the Convention when it became the first State to ratify the Convention and is proud to be part of one hundred and ninety three [193] States Parties that are part of the Chemical Weapons Convention. In line with our commitment to the SDGs and our Foreign Policy, Fiji is fully committed to the implementation of this Convention.

We have come a long way and yet again celebrate the twenty- first years of existence of the Convention.

We congratulate the OPCW and in particular the support of the States Parties for the continuous motivation to ensure proper and effective implementation of the Convention. We can all agree that our joint undertakings have taken us to a point where 96% of the world's declared chemical weapons stockpiles have been destroyed as compared to 80% in the last review conference.

Fiji welcomes the declaration made by the sole Possessor State in their obligation to destroy their entire stockpile of chemical weapons. We encourage the State Party to fulfil this crucial obligation as soon as feasible. We also encourage the remaining four sovereign States yet to ratify the Convention to do so, for the promotion of peace, in all regions around the world.

While Fiji is regarded as a hub in our region, we remain susceptible to the illicit trade of chemicals, other than its peaceful means, given the porous nature of our borders and limited resources. Fiji, like many other small developing island States is further limited in its ability to specifically address the challenges of effective implementation of the Convention.

Though we are faced with limited resources and competing legislative demands, Fiji will continue to strive for effective implementation of the Convention within these challenges, as it fully subscribes to the aspirations of the Convention.

Fiji is working towards signing the Privileges and Immunities Agreement with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW in the coming year. Fiji has also benefited from the Technical Secretariat in facilitating the sub regional workshop for the implementation of the Convention a few years back and stands ready to assist our Pacific Island States in this regard.

Like other developing countries, Fiji fully recognizes and understands the importance of establishing partnership with regional and sub-regional States Parties to ensure effective implementation of the Convention. Fiji believes that close engagement with other States Parties in areas of information sharing and common interests could assist States Parties in the full enactment of the Convention.

My delegation is confident that this Review Conference which is aimed to provide the future direction of the OPCW in the next five years and review the operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention will also focus on strengthening our cooperation with the view to address future challenges.

In this regard, we would call on enhancement of implementation support for small island States to ensure that we effectively carry out our role, both nationally and as a group at the sub regional level, without placing unnecessary burdens on ourselves and restricting growth and development in our small vulnerable economies.

Fiji reiterates its full support to the Secretariat for the OPCW for its commitment towards fulfilling the ambitions and obligations of the Convention let alone its prime objective to eradicate stockpiles of chemical weapons and ensuring a world free of chemical weapons in the future.

Lastly, Mr Chairperson, my delegation wishes you and all the distinguished delegates a successful Review Conference. Our delegation would also like to request that the statement to be considered as an official documents of the Fourth Review Conference.

Thank you

----- //// -----